INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON NEW HORIZONS IN EDUCATION
INTE2012

Assessing Elearning Teaching Quality of Faculty Members in Teachers' College at King Saud University: Students perspectives

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Abstract

This paper examines students' perspectives about assessing Elearning teaching quality for faculty members in teachers' college at King Saud University. The sample of the study includes all enrolled students in Teachers' College during the academic year of 2009-2010, which they were (2282) students. Two questions are stated to be answered: (a) what are the perspectives of students about assessing Elearning teaching quality for faculty members in science, literary and educational departments in the Teachers' College? (b) What are the perspectives of students about assessing Elearning teaching quality for faculty members within each department?. Participants were asked to complete a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire. The results revealed that Educational department has had the highest mean score (3.92), followed by Literary (3.91) and Science (3.79) Departments, respectively. Further, results reveal that within each department, Curriculum and Instructions has had the highest mean with (4.01) in Educational departments; Islamic Studies had the highest mean with (4.09) in literary departments; and Science Department had the highest mean with (4.08) in all scientific departments. Finally, students thought the Elearning Teaching quality of their faculty members in teachers' college at King Saud University was satisfied.

Keywords: Elearning Teaching Quality; Performance of Teaching; and Quality Assessment.

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I. Introduction

The rapid development in all higher education institutions made the Elearning Teaching quality has been recently stressed. Assessing and measuring the efficiency and effectiveness of teaching performance is an ongoing process, so it is a crucial issue in higher education. Assessing performance helps faculty members think about what results and skills that they want their students to acquire. It also validates expectations of learning outcomes and maps such outcomes with the institution's vision, mission, and objectives. Moreover, assessment supports continence communication, feedback, and dialogue about performance of teaching.

Using Educational technology became a core and critical issue in education, In line with the fast advance seen in technology, the use of technological resources in education has come to play an important role in terms of drawing students' attention to the subjects studied in the classroom so that success increases and the knowledge is better internalized. (Can, Sendil, 2010, p46). In addition, using Elearning became a developmental step, Sammour, G.N. (2009) identified Elearning as a strategic resource that can be utilized as an increasing variety of venues such as homes, workplaces, and traditional institutions of learning, education, and training. Elearning systems are becoming technologically sophisticated and complicated, with regard to training management or course management. Their use does not always match well with traditional modes of teaching and learning and much care needs to be taken when considering the use of Elearning in educational institutions. (Sammour, G.N, 2009, p1). Elearning require policies balancing different expectations of participants and considering how the users perceive ethics during online learning. As in the case of face-to-face classes; learners must show respect and tolerance among each other, and conduct civil relations and interaction based on pre-determined rules. (Toprak, Elif ; Ozkanal, Berrin ; Aydin, Sinan, 2010, p78).

Traditionally, the role of students in the learning process is undeniably passive, a situation that leads them to accept knowledge and information provided to them by their respective instructors. Students have thus a limited set of opportunities to express their ideas and opinions about their learning. As a result, students assessment of teaching (SAT) in higher education became a necessary tool to improve learning and teaching (Bie & Meng 2009). Although students assessment of teaching (SAT) are not generally accepted as being reliable, nor provide meaningful information (Pan, Tan, Ragupathi, Booluck, Roop, & Ip 2009), numerous work has been done on investigating STUDENTS ASSESSMENT OF TEACHING (SAT)in higher education (Seldin 1993; Marsh & Dunkin 1997; Kember & Wong 2000; Brown 2008; Kang 2008; El Hassan 2009; Kember & Leung 2009; & Pan et. al. 2009). That is because measuring the efficiency and effectiveness of teaching plays a vital role in higher education institutions (Chen & Hoshower 2003, Smith 2009).

The Importance of students assessment of teaching (SAT) revealed from many studies as McKeachie (1997), Wachtel (1998), Spencer and Schmelkin (2002), and Stark-Wroblewski, Ahlering, & Brill (2007) assert that research studies have shown that students are best placed to assess various aspects of teaching quality, where their ratings are relatively valid, multidimensional and quite reliable. To achieve that, Kember and Leung (2009) concluded that instruments for assessing the teaching and learning are comparatively inadequate. Therefore, Feldman (1997) believes that instruments of assessing teaching should be multidimensional because teaching and instruction in higher education consist of various components. Designing multidimensional and comprehensive instruments for assessing teaching provides valuable feedback to instructors about their teaching quality (e.g. strengths and weaknesses); help students select courses; facilitate making personnel and administrative decisions (e.g. hiring, contract, renewal, promotion, awards, and tenure) (Marsh & Dunkin 1997; Wachtel 1998; Kember & Wong 2000; Stark-Wroblewski et. al. 2007; Brown 2008; Kang 2008; Bie & Meng 2009; Smith 2009).

Moreover, it is crucial for faculty members to understand how to use such feedback so as to address their students' concerns and needs (Pan et. al. 2009).

In the other hand, Olivares (2003, p.240) states that 'there is no empirical evidence to suggest that the widespread implementation of teacher ratings has resulted in more effective teachers or more learned students'. Seldin (1993), Olivares (2003), Kang (2008), Remedios & Lieberman (2008), and Pan et. al. (2009) explains that in spite of the extensive use of SAT, validity, fairness, and accuracy of the measures are not well accepted as being valid, reliable, and subjective because such assessment materials are biased and can be affected by external factors (Olivares 2001; Griffin 2004; & Stark-Wroblewski et. al. 2007), and may ultimately produce results that might be misinterpreted and thus misused (Theall & Franklin 2001).

Any way, if we agree or not about if the students are qualified or not to assessing their teachers teaching quality, at least we could use students assessing as indicator in faculty member assessment. Assessment of teaching effectiveness of faculty members in higher education, as Campbell & Bozeman (2008, p.13) assert, 'is one of the most daunting and arduous tasks confronting administrators, particularly department chairs and deans'. Furthermore, Theall and Franklin (2001, p.45) affirm that 'few issues in higher education are as sensitive, divisive, and political as faculty evaluation and in particular the quality and value of the information provided by students in their evaluations'. Generally, assessments of teaching include instructional skills, delivering and facilitating instructions, evaluating student learning, satisfactions and attitudes toward courses, students' needs, instructor's knowledge, organization and preparation, communication and interaction skills, stimulation, and fairness in grading (D'Appollonia & Abrami 1997; Kang 2008; Bie and Meng 2009; Smith 2009).

Campbell and Bozeman (2008) explains assessments of teaching effectiveness as influenced by students' perspectives and attitudes. students assessment of teaching (SAT) provides students with great opportunities to voice their concerns regarding their education (Bie & Meng 2009). Spencer and Schmelkin (2002) and Greimel-Fuhrmann and Geyer (2003) have found that subjects of their study subjects think that they are qualified to rate their instructors, and that the assessing of the teaching process is important in improving teaching methods. Similarly, in their study on Florida Community College, Campbell and Bozeman (2008) have noticed that the majority of students strongly believe that their assessment has a positive and valuable role, and has thus been considered vitally important. Also, They recommend that students should participate in completing assessment forms to assess their instructors and that the respective instructors should, thereafter, be informed about the results of students' assessment.

Hussein, Hisham (2011) aims to identify the Attitudes of faculty members at Saudi Universities towards using E-learning Management System, The results showed a positive Attitudes of the members of the faculty at Saudi University towards E-learning management system JUSUR. the results showed how their needs for training in using the system and in particular learning content management and file sharing, forums, and Questions Bank. Moreover, results showed no difference in attitudes towards using the system among the faculty members regarding gender or the types of colleges humanitarian, scientific and health.

Guler, Cetin ; Altun, Arif (2010) aims to identify problems and issues teacher trainees experience when designing Learning Objects (LO). The findings indicated that teacher trainees experienced content development related issues (such as, understanding LO paradigm, development software and environments, content packaging and repository) the most. In addition, project management and copyright related issues were emerged, as well. As Becker (2000) puts it well, teachers' beliefs and philosophies affect their use of resources. Therefore, starting the process with prospective teachers and integrating LO design as part of their training curricula, where these issues and problems addressed, would be beneficial in the long term.

Eskil, Murat; Ozgan, Habib ; Balkar, Betuel (2010). Explore the opinions of 9-13 year old students' perspective regarding the interaction with classroom technology (CT) in Science and

Technology (S&T) lessons in Kilis city of Turkey. The issues discussed here can provide some ideas for educators to improve their teaching. Two types of students are used from private schools: from schools with high levels of teaching resources (HLTR), and from schools with low levels of teaching resources (LLTR). The students are surveyed in five general areas related to CT. The population of the study is 263 students (4. and 5 class) which belongs to four different primary schools in Kilis city. Subjects (participants) were chosen through random sampling. "Personal Data Form" and "Survey About Students' Opinions on Using CT in S&T Lessons" which were improved by the researchers were used as data collection tools. From this research, Some differences have been found in students' point of view on which it leads support on learning, drawing attention, increasing the research opportunities and the effects of computers on learning according to the school types by using CT in S&T lessons.

Isman, Aytekin ; Celikli, Guelsuen Ersoy (2009) aims to find out the self-efficacy level among participant students and analyze their beliefs. This study showed that male students are more confident comparing to female student. Teo, Timothy (2009) Examines the relationship between computer self-efficacy and intended uses of technology of student teachers (N = 1094) at a teacher training institute in Singapore. Results showed that significant relationships exist among Basic Teaching Skills, Technology for Pedagogy, Traditional Use of Technology, and Constructivist Use of Technology. However, Advanced Teaching Skills did not influence Traditional Use of Technology and Constructivist Use of Technology in a significant way. Overall, the results of this study offer some evidence that student teachers' self-efficacy is a significant influence on whether they use technology in a traditionalist or constructivist way.

II. The study:

The current study addresses the two major research questions: (1) What are students' perspectives about assessing Elearning quality teaching for faculty members in Teachers' College, including: (a) Science departments, (b) Literary departments, (c) Educational departments? (2) What are perspectives of students about assessing Elearning quality teaching for faculty members among departments within each field in Teachers' College?

In addition, the main purpose of this study is to investigate students' assessment about the Elearning Teaching quality for faculty members in all of the departments in teachers' college at King Saud University (KSU), during the academic year of 2009–2010. The significance of this study stems from the fact that it becomes necessary for each single higher education institution; TCs are no exception, to improve the status quo of its faculty member, develop and expand its curriculum and study plans. This study, to the knowledge of the researchers, is the first in its kind to evaluate the Elearning Teaching quality of the faculty members in (TC).

Descriptive research design was used to obtain thorough information concerning the status quo about the Elearning Teaching quality of faculty members. Sample of the study was (2282) students during the academic year of 2009–2010. Participants were asked to complete a five-point Likert scale questionnaire (Strongly Agree=5, Agree=4, Agree to some Extend=3, Disagree=2, and Strongly Disagree=1).

The questionnaire was adopted from many instruments that examines the students attitudes, perceptions and perspectives, as Al-Karni et al. (2006), Hussein (2011) Construct validity and content validity of the questionnaire was ensured. It was sent to five expert professors who specialized in measurement and evaluation for revision and feedback. Various items of the questionnaire have been modified based on received feedback provided by the expert professors. In its final format, the modified questionnaire compromises 29 items. The researchers verified the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire by conducting pilot study. The sample of the pilot study consisted of (50) students.

Cronbach's alpha was (0.94), which is considered to by very high, indicating that the questionnaire is reliable (Harris, 1998).

To successfully achieve the goals of this study, the researchers grouped all departments into three major domains: Scientific, Literary and Educational departments. The number of all courses and classes related to each department during the academic year of 2009 – 2010 were calculated to obtain appropriate results that are expected to reflect students' perspectives about faculty members' Elearning Teaching Quality.

The students were asked to electronically complete a separate evaluation form for each course that they were registered in at the end of semester anonymously. Since two probe statements were used in the questionnaire, any wrong response to either of them, the whole evaluation form was eliminated from the final analysis. The valid calculated and analyzed evaluation forms were (20538) forms of (2282) students for the academic year of 2009 – 2010, which that mean each students complete (9) form to evaluate (9) courses. Statistical treatments were conducted to extract results.

III. Results and Discussions

Findings about students' perspectives of assessing Elearning quality of teaching for faculty members in Teachers' College at KSU are being displayed in the following tables. In addition, percentile rank of faculty members in each single department compared to the rest of the departments is also shown. For instance, a percentile rank of (75) indicates that performance of the department is higher than (75%) of other departments in both college levels.

The first question of this study addresses to perspectives of students about assessing Elearning quality teaching for faculty members in Teachers' College, including three main domains: Scientific departments, literary departments, and Educational departments. As shown in Table 3, even though differences in mean scores are minor, Educational departments have collectively achieved the highest mean score of (3.92) at the college level. Such a result indicates that students highly assessed faculty members belonging to Educational departments, which surpassed those belonging to Scientific and Literary departments. Moreover, it was noticed from students' grades during the academic year of 2009 – 2010 that there was direct proportion between students' high grades and their high ratings to their instructors in courses presented by Educational departments. In contrast, it is also noticed that the lowest mean and percentile rank were for scientific departments, in which students' grades in courses presented by scientific departments are relatively low.

The second question of the study is related to perspectives of students about assessing Elearning quality teaching for faculty members among departments within each domain in Teachers' College. Results in Table 4 show that the Science department achieved the highest mean score of (4.08) and its percentile rank among the other Scientific departments was (62.5%) at the college level. It was also noticed that students' ratings of Elearning Teaching quality in Science department surpassed their ratings in both Computer Science and Math departments. It was observed from students' grades during the academic year of 2009 – 2010 that there is a direct proportion between students' low grades and their low ratings to their instructors in courses presented by both Computer Science and Math departments, with a slight difference in favor of Computer Science department.

Islamic Studies department achieved the highest mean score of (4.09) and its percentile ranks at college level was (82.85%) among the other Literary departments, and was (92.14%) . There was a direct proportion between students' high grades and their high ratings to their instructors in courses presented by Islamic Studies department. Even though students' rating for their instructors in Arabic Language

department was good (3.74), its percentile ranks at college level was very low (21.42%) among the other Literary departments.

In addition, Results showed that the Instructional Technology department achieved the highest mean score of (4.03) and its percentile ranks at college level was (85.71%) among the other Educational departments. Based on students' grades, there was a direct proportion between students' high grades and their high ratings to their instructors in courses presented by Instructional Technology departments. High mean score attained by Instructional Technology department might due to the nature of its courses, which make the students interesting for students as they are technology-based and have many relevant applications to their daily life. In contrast, mean score of Physical Education department was (3.81), where it was ranked as (35.71%) higher than other departments at college level. and (63.35%) .

In general, the overall results of the study raise several questions concerning the objectivity and integrity of students' assessment of teaching. Doubt of students assessment of teaching (sat)is affirmed by the fact that students assessment of teaching (sat)is directly proportional to students' grades in courses they study in each department. further, external factors might increase the lack of validity and reliability of sat. such factors include renewal of the non-Saudi faculty members' contracts, relationships with students, and faculty members' personality. therefore, students assessment of teaching (sat)should not be considered the main criterion for rating the quality of teaching in teachers' college as well as developing teaching and learning processed at KSU. results of this study are consisted with other studies, including Seldin (1993), olivares (2001), olivares (2003), griffin (2004), stark-wroblewski et. al. (2007), kang (2008), Remedios & lieberman (2008), and pan et. al. (2009). these studies conclude that although the students assessment of teaching (sat)was extensively used in higher education institutions, its validity and accuracy as measures of teaching are not fully accepted due to its biases and being influenced by external factors.

In addition, Results of Students Assessment of Teaching might be misinterpreted and misused as Theall & Franklin (2001) stated. Kang (2008) summarizes the most common problems regarding Students Assessment of Teaching (SAT): (1) issues related to the development of instrument quality and its functions; (2) misleading of applied raw scores and its averages, which might lead to inconsistent statistical analyses; and (3) adopting class-average scores, which neglects variability within classes and ignores the peculiarity of students' assessment.

IV. Conclusion:

The Researchers of this study reach a conclusion that students are neither sufficiently qualified nor objective to tackle the task of assessing faculty members. Students lack the ability to rate their instructors' subject knowledge or Elearning quality. Therefore, students usually tend to highly evaluate instructors who give higher grades. An important recommendation of the research is that students assessment of teaching (SAT)should not be considered as a the main criterion for judging the Elearning Teaching quality. Rather, it can be one of the crucial indicators for assessing teaching.

Acknowledgements

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